

MINUTES OF THE HALF CROWN-MARSH NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION***Approved at the 12-08-2025 Meeting***

July 14, 2025. Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar- 6:00 P.M.

Commissioners present: Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Chair; Ruby Booz, Donna Marcantonio, Peter Schur, Jo Solet, Members.

Commissioners Absent: N/A

Staff present: Eric Hill, Survey Director

Due to statewide emergency actions limiting the size of public gatherings in response to COVID-19, this meeting was held online with remote participation and was closed to in-person attendance. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

With a quorum of commissioners and the applicant present, Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. She explained the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures then introduced the commissioners and staff.

1) Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties**HCM-699: 987-989 Memorial Drive, by Barrington Court Condo Trust: Requesting window replacement package approval for building.**

Eric Hill, staff, introduced the case and discussed existing conditions of the building and the commission's jurisdiction. He noted that the applicant was hoping to receive approval for specific replacement windows for unit owners in the building, to expedite the review process when they apply for a permit. The window package, if approved, would allow for CHC staff review of window replacement applications in the building if they comply with the approved window specifications. Eric noted that the adjacent building, Longview at 983-986 Memorial Drive, received approval for a similar window package application in 2024.

Thea Weitz, the property manager for the building, stated that they applied for a window package to give unit owners a clear and concise review process, and to limit the windows that they may attempt to purchase to require uniformity for the building.

Leroy Harrison, the building superintendent, added that it would be helpful to receive approval for both options, the Pella Reserve and the Renewal by Andersen window options to give the owners some flexibility on pricing and availability.

Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Chair, opened the meeting to questions of fact by commissioners.

Jo Solet asked what the requirement or proposal would be for screens.

Eric Hill stated that staff always has recommended half-screens for windows as they do not entirely obscure the windows, while still providing a necessary function.

Jo Solet followed up citing a letter submitted from a member of the public regarding the material of the proposed screens, if they would be metal or a fiberglass material.

Marie-Pierre Dillenseger then asked staff to read the two letters that the commission received so all could hear the public comments related to the screen materiality. They talked about the material of the windows, the possibility of fiberglass screens to warp or rip easier, and the general quality of replacement windows over restoring historic windows.

Thea Weitz stated that the condo management company would do surveys and assessments of the window screens periodically to make sure they are in good condition.

Related to the questions on the material of the proposed windows, Eric Hill, staff, stated that the Pella Reserve windows proposed are wood windows that are clad at the exterior in aluminum, and are viewed as better-quality windows than the other option of the Renewal by Andersen windows which are made of Fibrex, a synthetic polymer of wood and plastic. Both options are more rot and termite resistant so there would not be a need for exterior storms for any new replacement windows.

Ruby Booz asked if there was a timeline for replacement and if there was a protocol for when windows are removed from the market or become obsolete.

Eric Hill explained that the window package is valid for only the approved windows and if a unit owner wants a different window or if the Pella Reserve or Renewal by Andersen go off the market, those future cases would need review and approval by the Commission, unless a new, updated window package was approved by the Commission. He added that there is no timeline for unit owners to replace windows, and this package would not require unit owners to replace their windows, it would simply streamline the review and permitting process if a unit owner wanted to replace windows in the future.

Jo Solet asked if you could tell the difference between the Pella and Andersen window from the street.

Leroy Harrison stated that they had a meeting to review both window types and people could not tell the difference between them. They are slightly different than the existing wood windows, but it is not too noticeable unless you are directly next to them and comparing. Plus he added that the storm windows would be removed in these cases, so the windows would be even more visible than now.

Thea Weitz also added that the building hires window cleaners periodically to clean the windows inside and out, and are accessed via the units.

Marie-Pierre Dillenseger opened the meeting to public questions and comments.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, asked how many units were in the building and is the applicants knew how many units have had their windows replaced. She also asked if there was a survey of owners to see if they preferred to replace or restore their windows.

Leroy Harrison noted that there are 84 units in the building and approximately 10-15 units have replaced their windows at this time. There was no survey undertaken at this point.

Thea Weitz added that she would love to survey the residents after approval to see where most stand on the matter of replacement windows or retaining their original windows.

Helen Walker of Linnaean Street noted that she lives in a similar apartment building in Cambridge and explained that the CHC and National Park Service have released reports documenting that well-maintained historic windows with storm windows are just as insulated, if not more than replacement windows today.

Eric Hill thanked Helen for the mention and added that the CHC always recommends that owners retain and restore windows rather than replace as historic wood windows have a much longer life (100+ years) than many replacement windows which have warranties for 10-15 years. He also encouraged the applicants to work with unit owners to donate historic window sashes to architectural salvage companies so the windows, when replaced, could be donated and reused in other buildings.

Marie-Pierre Dillenseger closed public comment and began the period for commission discussion.

Jo Solet stated that she agreed with the proposal and had no issues.

Marie-Pierre Dillenseger agreed and added that this is a building-specific application, and these packages are reviewed on a case-by-case basis for buildings. Other buildings would need to apply separately for such an application.

Peter Schur added that it was a wonderful meeting, and he supported the application. He felt the submittal was detailed and complete.

Donna Marcantonio agreed and stated that she loved the plan and that it was efficient and could incentivize people to make the building more uniform.

Donna Marcantonio made a motion to approve the proposal as submitted.

Peter Schur seconded the motion.

The commission was 5-0 in favor of the motion.

A motion to approve the Minutes of the June 16, 2025 meeting was made by Jo Solet. Ruby Booz seconded the motion.

The commission was 5-0 in favor of the motion

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Eric Hill, Survey Director, Cambridge Historical Commission